



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

August 12, 2010

Dear Chief State School Officer:

Thank you for your hard work, leadership, and dedication in working toward the goal of ensuring that all students achieve proficiency. We know that parents are important partners in our work to ensure student success and improve our schools. Research consistently demonstrates that students with involved parents experience higher grades and test scores, improved behavior and attendance, and increased graduation rates. In particular, we recognize the integral nature of family engagement in schools supported with federal funds to improve the academic achievement of disadvantaged students under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, where parents are more likely to be economically disadvantaged and from minority racial or ethnic backgrounds. In recognition of this, Secretary Duncan has recently announced the U.S. Department of Education's proposal for the reauthorization of Title I to double the amount of federal dollars set aside for family engagement by increasing the Title I parental involvement set aside from 1 to 2 percent of a district's Title I, Part A funds. For more information, please see: <http://www2.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2010/05/05052010.html>.

I encourage you to support your districts in engaging parents by encouraging them to reach out to find community and national partners. One example of an organization that is striving to facilitate parental involvement, particularly in Title I schools, is the National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE), <http://www.nabse.org/>. NABSE is working to engage parents through a series of meetings, such as one that took place in Galveston, Texas where over 200 parents representing diverse groups were in attendance. Staff from the U.S. Department of Education will be attending and presenting at the NABSE annual conference in Fort Worth, Texas, on November 17-21, 2010. At this event, NABSE will be hosting a Parents Day Summit, among other activities, that may be useful, in particular, for parents of Title I students seeking to improve their child's achievement and to participate more effectively in their child's school.

I urge you to make your districts aware of this opportunity and to encourage them to permit parents of Title I students to participate. Please know that a district may use Title I, Part A funds to support parent participation at such events if the costs are reasonable and necessary for the implementation of Title I, Part A programs. In general, the Department of Education encourages parents to attend local or regionally based training opportunities, such as workshops or conferences, when they are the same or similar as those being held out-of-State. Upon return from any workshop or conference that is not available to all interested parents, attendees should provide information and, if possible, training on the conference topics to other parents of children enrolled in Title I, Part A programs. Paying travel and other costs associated with attendance at out-of-State conferences and workshops may also be allowable in more limited cases if those conferences and workshops provide training and information that cannot be obtained locally. For more information on parent involvement under Title I, please see the non-regulatory guidance available at: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/parentinvguid.pdf>.

400 MARYLAND AVE., S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202  
[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

Our mission is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the nation.

Page 2 – Dear Chief State School Officer

Once again, I commend you for the work you have done and continue to do on behalf of our nation's students. We look forward to continuing to work closely with you to support strong family and community engagement in our schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zollie Stevenson, Jr.', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Zollie Stevenson, Jr. Ph. D.  
Director, Student Achievement and  
School Accountability Programs

cc: State Title I Director